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ABSTRACT

This study profiles bookmobile libraries operating within the state of Ohio. Details of the services offered to the public by these libraries were gathered through a questionnaire soliciting information about individual programs. The questionnaire was completed by 35 librarians in Ohio--in each case, the librarian most responsible for the day-to-day operation of the bookmobile. Data collected covers: stops and stop selection; staffing; collections; services and programming; and characteristics of the bookmobile, age and make; and budgets. Among major conclusions is the finding that bookmobile libraries in Ohio are decidedly lacking in their ability to offer patrons adequate reference service. Catalogs of the bookmobile's collection, as well as the collection of the host library, are not available, and only a very small percentage of bookmobiles in Ohio are accessible to the handicapped. Cover letter and survey instrument are appended. (Contains 20 references.) (Author/TMK)

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ED 367 349

A 1990 Survey of Bookmobile Operations Within the State of Ohio

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Ted J. Smith

1990

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Abstract

This study outlines bookmobile libraries operating within the State of Ohio. Details of the services offered to the public, by these libraries, were gathered through a questionnaire soliciting information about individual programs. The questionnaire was completed by thirty-five librarians in Ohio--in each case, the librarian most responsible for the day to day operation of the bookmobile. Data collected covers: stops and stop selection; staffing; collections; services and programming; and characteristics of the bookmobile, age and make.

Some of the major conclusions include the fact that bookmobile libraries in Ohio are decidedly lacking in their ability to offer patrons adequate reference service. Catalogs of the bookmobile's collection, as well as, the collection of the host library are not available, and only a very small percentage of bookmobiles in Ohio are accessible to the handicapped.

Master's Research Paper by

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B.S., University of Iowa, 1975

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I. Introduction

> Until the year 1896 there was no rural free mail delivery in the United States. Farmers and others living in country places had to go to the post office to get their mail. One of the results of this system was that rural families made relatively little use of the mail service. People in the cities and villages had a decided advantage in the use of post office facilities.[1]

What has this statement to do with bookmobile libraries? It is used as a reason for the need, desirability, and justification of establishing bookmobile services. Henry B. Stevens, Executive Secretary, Agricultural Extension Services and Experiment Station, University of New Hampshire in an address to the Citizens Library Committee of that state draws a parallel between the beginning of rural free mail delivery in 1896 and the need for rural free library delivery in 1935. Stevens states,

> The advent of R.F.D. (Rural Free Delivery) was a revolution which we hardly stop nowadays to appreciate. It came only after great struggle. ...Finally, amid much scepticism, the service was started... the cost of course has been great. But who today would suggest discontinuing the service?[2]

With this in mind, a survey of nine hundred farm homes in New Hampshire representing sections of each county of the State was conducted. Of the statistics recorded relevant to this discussion, it was found that a much larger percentage of the rural population had access to a daily newspaper (71%), radio (73%), electric lights (60%), and running water (62%) than it did to library service (49%).[3] As a result of this study, Stevens said,

> ...there is a great potential service here which rural

people need and is quite likely that someway will be found shortly so that they will have this service much more adequately than in past.[4]

Today, people in rural areas are still separated from fixed site library facilities. They have been joined by urban groups isolated by physical, geographical, language, and cultural barriers so that in 1990 the need to take "services" to the people, rural and urban, still exists. That libraries have responded to these needs is evident from the following statistics.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics there are 70,000 library outlets in the United States. Of these 70,000 outlets, 50,000 are bookmobile stops. This means that seventy percent of the library outlets available to the people in this country come from bookmobiles.[5] Bernard Vavrek, Director of The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship says, "despite this age of technology, in which one might suppose that the bookmobile has become an anachronism, it is proving quite the contrary."[6]

Statement of Problem

The Ohio Library Association Task Force on Bookmobiles has discovered that there does not now exist a study outlining bookmobile operations within the State of Ohio. The need for such a study has been expressed by John Philip, Supervisor of Field Operations with the State Library of Ohio-the librarian responsible for consulting on

bookmobile operations within Ohio. As long ago as the summer of 1985 he stated that "unfortunately adequate data on services offered by bookmobiles in Ohio is not presently available."[7] In 1990, based upon conversations with Mr. Philip, that is still the case.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are to determine, as much as possible, an overall description of the bookmobile programs operating within the State of Ohio. This description details the services offered to the public through an investigation of the daily operations of the individual bookmobile programs including: stops and stop selection; staffing; collections; services and programming; characteristics of the bookmobile, age and make; and budgets. It is hoped that a report regarding bookmobile libraries in Ohio may be offered, through the Ohio Library Association Task Force on Bookmobiles, to participants at the Ohio Library Association Convention meeting in Dayton, Ohio later this year.

Limitations to Study

This investigation details only bookmobile operations being conducted within the State of Ohio. It includes libraries that operate their own bookmobiles, as well as libraries that contract bookmobile service, such as the State Library. This involves 67 counties and 58 libraries, according to the 1989/1990 edition of the American Library

Directory.[8] Therefore, findings are not generalizable to all bookmobile libraries.

While there is a great deal of literature on the subject of bookmobiles in other countries, especially Great Britain, Norway, and Russia, only literature pertaining to bookmobile usage in the United States was considered.

Questions concerning cost per circulation/cost per stop, etc. are purposefully left out of the survey because there is no universally accepted formula for equating these costs, making a compilation of statistics in this area impossible.

Definition of terms

Bookmobile -a vehicle operated by a public library system that travels on a scheduled, repetitive route

Rural -any town, or community of fewer than 2,500 persons

II. Literature Review

A search of Library Literature and Library and Information Science Abstracts from 1970 to the present revealed numerous articles concerning bookmobiles. Most of this literature is, sadly, of the anecdotal variety. However, references in the articles that were of use opened the way to a broader search.

Of the usable literature concerning bookmobiles the "primer" is Eleanor Brown's Bookmobiles and Bookmobile Service.[9] This 1967 monograph was designed to fill the need for information "in detail and in depth" that had been neglected up until that time because,

> . . . hard facts regarding costs, staff required, bookmobile specifications, materials to be carried on the bookmobile, were scattered as chapters in books on library administration, as scores of magazine articles or were non-existent.[10]

The subject of this single, comprehensive study, while providing insight into bookmobile operations, are usable only as they are placed within the context of the time. Since 1967 many things have changed regarding bookmobile library service--most notably developments in technology such as the use of cellular telephone, telefacsimile, micro-computers, and radios.

Twelve chapters encompass the book with general information covering the history of bookmobiles, the advantages and disadvantages of bookmobile operations, and standards and evaluation of bookmobile service. The chapter

covering evaluation of bookmobile services contains a 1963 survey commissioned by the Mississippi Library Association to be used as a basis for measuring the quality of service being offered in Mississippi, as well as conditions needed for the establishment of new bookmobile service.

This early survey covered the following areas: organization, schedules, materials, materials and services, physical equipment, and housing. While no results are given concerning the findings of the Mississippi survey, Brown states that the questionnaire is " an excellent aid in evaluating bookmobile service. . . and the questions on the Mississippi charts are so well phrased that all can be answered with a clear cut yes or no."[11] Brown concludes her book with thirty-eight recommendations for further study and research. One example follows:

> What better methods can be found to satisfy special reader requests and expedite the filling of reserves on bookmobiles? . . . Should mail and telephone service be used to speed up service? What liasion can be arranged between central library circulation and reference departments and the bookmobile department to improve this type of service.[12]

A study was released in 1975 that dealt with answering part of the question posed by Brown above. In A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Alternative Library Delivery Systems, Hu, Boom, and Kaltreider[13] studied the cost of alternative library delivery programs, where alternative delivery systems are defined as "systems other than the permanent fixed site library which are used for delivering

library services."[14] The two systems are bookmobile delivery versus books-by-mail in Pennsylvania. The objective of this monograph is to provide librarians with information on:

1. The relevant costs of bookmobile versus books-by-mail service.
2. The nature of the public demand for bookmobile versus books-by-mail service.
3. The role that the number of stops, length, and frequency of stops play in the use of the bookmobile service.
4. How costs and benefits of bookmobile service compare with books-by-mail service.[15]

One reason given for the need of this evaluation is for management purposes--so that a measure of the efficiency of the two programs may be obtained. Another is to provide the figures needed to justify the programs for budget support.

The authors caution that the book discusses the methodology for applying benefit-cost analysis to libraries in general and provides empirical examples of the application of this technique to the two delivery systems mentioned above. They go on to state that the results of the study can not be generalized overall, but that the techniques used to evaluate the cost comparison may be used and should be applicable and transferable to similar programs elsewhere.[16]

In a 1972 study similar to the benefit-cost analysis noted above, staff members of the Dakota Library System undertook research of its system's bookmobile operation.[17] Questions for which answers were sought include:

1. How much does it (bookmobile service) really cost?
2. How can we economize?
3. Are we in the right places at the right time?
4. Where are we not providing service?
5. What is the quality level of our service?
6. What is the relationship of the bookmobile services to the total budget and total circulation?[18]

They based this study on their January-June schedule. This involved two bookmobiles covering forty-eight stops. One bookmobile made fourteen stops over a two week period, while the other made thirty-four stops in the same period. No explanation is given for the wide difference in total stops between the two bookmobiles, nor for the circulation differences. The bookmobile making just fourteen stops circulated 80,000 items per year, while the bookmobile making thirty-four stops only circulates 40,000 items per year.[19] In determining "real costs" of bookmobile operations, statistics were gathered to represent: cost per mile driven; cost per stop; cost per trip; cost per book per stop; and books, vehicle, and salary costs to circulate one book.

Results of this study enabled the Dakota Library system to change scheduling in different areas. As a result of the cost per book per stop study, some stops were reduced or eliminated totally, while new locations were incorporated into the schedule. The study points out that while some stops showed poor results in the cost per book per stop analysis, they were still kept on the schedule "due to their

long distance from any source of service, peculiar geographical circumstances, and small clusters of people with no cultural service available."[20] While this research benefitted the Dakota Library System, the results of this type of study can not be generalized. Here again, the research is good for use as a guide in determining costs of bookmobile operations, and how an evaluation of schedules may be made using cost and stop efficiency data.

In searching the literature, only two studies are available that deal directly with the bookmobile services and operations that resemble the type sought in this proposal. This does not necessarily mean that investigations of this nature have not been undertaken, but it does show that little has been published in the way of results.

In 1986 Vavrek conducted a nationwide survey of bookmobile services in the United States.[21] This research consisted of an extensive questionnaire mailed to one hundred sixty-eight libraries (out of a possible 1000 operating bookmobiles) in the United States. Approximately fifty percent (88) were returned. However, sixteen of those questionnaires were unusable as the libraries no longer operated bookmobile service, voiding their responses.[22]

Vavrek's survey was a simple status-type study designed to cover: trends in bookmobile service, budgets, staffing, collection development, programming, scheduling, and physical descriptions of the bookmobiles. From the

survey, a description of an "average" bookmobile operation followed. One problem that becomes apparent immediately is the scope of this study. The immense variation between states in their geographical make-up alone makes the idea of an average description impossible. Concerning this, Vavrek himself says,

> Are we talking about a small community in Ohio or Pennsylvania or are we talking about vast distances that separate communities, such as in Michigan or Texas where we may have 1,500 miles between communities.[23]

The problems involved here are exemplified in the question: "How far do you travel from your headquarters library"? In Ohio the distance may be small, due to the clustering of populations, while in Texas the distance may well be immense as Vavrek said. The weakness in this research then, is not in its intent, but in the magnitude of its scope.

In *A Survey of Bookmobile Service in North Carolina*,[24] Joanne Abel conducted a more specific investigation. Abel's 1986 study concerned itself only with questions pertaining to stops--more directly, their selection and evaluation--in North Carolina. All sixty-four regional, county, and city libraries which were reported as operating bookmobiles in the state by the Directory of North Carolina Public Libraries 1984-85 were sent questionnaires. The results of this survey revealed specific information for the use of comparing one's bookmobile operation to a "standard" within the State of North Carolina. As a guide to where bookmobile service stands in North Carolina, this study

fulfilled that need. Abel raises a point in the conclusion that must be expressed here:

> One of the things that is made clear by this research is that the professional literature on bookmobile librarianship should better reflect the experiences of those who are working in the field. Much that has been written about standards and evaluation would be revised with input from the practicing bookmobile librarians.[25]

There has been only one study conducted within the state of Ohio specifically dealing with bookmobiles. That 1982 study, *Bookmobile Reference Service Survey*[26], was concerned only with finding: the number and type of circulating and non-circulating reference books being carried on Ohio bookmobiles; the number of reference questions being handled each week; the segment of public using this service, and the schedule operated by the bookmobile. In regards to scheduling, the study found that 32% of the bookmobiles in Ohio circulate materials for two weeks, followed by 24% with four week circulations. Seventy percent reported changing their schedule to accommodate seasonal changes in usage. Most Ohio bookmobiles operate on a different schedule in the summer than they do in the fall, winter, and spring.[27]

As sources of literature were searched, one phrase cropped up over and over again, i.e., "unfortunately little literature exists in the field of bookmobile library operations." There is a great need for the publication of findings in this area.

III. Methodology

A preliminary questionnaire was designed and sent to John Philip, Supervisor, Field Operations for the State Library of Ohio, as well as to five other extension services librarians within the state who serve on the Ohio Library Association Task Force on Bookmobiles to insure that all needed, pertinent data is being elicited by the questionnaire. This questionnaire is laid out in eight parts-starting with general information about the library, the area served, and the population. It seeks, in addition, information about: stops and stop evaluation, staffing, collections, services and programming, physical characteristics of the bookmobiles, and annual bookmobile budgets. After studying the recommendations of the "pre-test" group a final questionnaire was designed.

This extensive questionnaire was then mailed to the directors of the fifty-eight public libraries that are currently operating or contracting bookmobile services within the state of Ohio. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a self addressed, postage paid envelope to facilitate replies and to help insure a favorable return rate. In order to get the information needed, the directors were asked, with the exception of the budgetary information, to let the person most responsible for the daily operation of the bookmobile fill out the questionnaire.

Since the intent of the research was to determine the

present status of bookmobile operations within Ohio, the questionnaire was designed to give descriptive information from which a composite of a "typical" or "average" bookmobile operation could be compiled. While, obviously, there exists no "typical" bookmobile, comparing the average service offered in Ohio with one's own operation may be useful for purposes of measurement--not of the overall success or failure of an operation--but of specific areas in that operation that are "off" the average.

IV. Results

Rather than discuss each question of the survey point by point, a more general overview of the results will be presented, part by part. Specific questions will be discussed only if they help to contribute to the composite bookmobile picture sought in this study.

According to the American Library Directory, there are 58 bookmobile library operations in the State. Of the fifty-eight questionnaires mailed, thirty-eight were returned. Of these, three were invalid because the libraries either no longer operated bookmobile programs, or there simply was not enough information provided by the respondent. This survey represents thirty-five of the fifty-eight operations, or 60%.

Within the survey, questions three and four of Part I are based upon twenty-two responses. No results exist for question three of Part III and questions one and two of Part VII because there are not enough responses to make a valid statement.

General Information Part I.

The person most responsible for the day-to-day operation of the bookmobile was asked to complete the questionnaire. In this capacity it was found that fifteen of the respondents have an M.L.S., eleven have a B.A. or B.S., and nine have high school educations. Job titles run the gamut from Extension Services Head, to Outreach Services

Program Head, Bookmobile Branch Manager, Bookmobile Coordinator, Bookmobile Librarian, to Driver/Librarian. Bookmobile Operations within Ohio are responsible for populations ranging from 4,000 to 900,000 people. Average coverage is 94,000, but this is skewed by five operations with populations well over 100,000 people. A better indication of the size of populations served would be the median, which is 43,000. The mode, or most frequently occurring population, is 30,000. Bookmobiles are used by approximately one-half of their registered patrons, in mostly rural settings. Seventy-seven percent of the respondents consider their main service area to be county wide. Only two reporting operations consider their main area of responsibility to be municipal. Bookmobiles account for approximately ten percent of their library's total circulation, and the biggest concern of bookmobilers, in providing service, is that of maintaining their vehicles. Bookmobiles were off the road an average of 11.5 days in 1989 due to mechanical problems. Here, again, that number is skewed by a few operations that had serious mechanical problems with bookmobiles. The median time off the road average was only five days. Other concerns are lack of community response, too much community response for staff to handle, and territorial disputes. On the average, bookmobiles are open for service 27 hours per week, or 1,400 hours per year. The yearly range is between 420 hours and 3,600 hours.

Stops Part II.

Time of turn around in schedules is two weeks for 45 percent (16) of the bookmobile programs. That is followed by five programs each that operate every week, every three weeks, and every four weeks respectively (Table 1). Four bookmobiles are on monthly schedules. Sixty percent operate evening stops ranging from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M., with 8:00 P.M. being the average. The duration of time for longest stops ranges from three quarters of an hour to six and one-half hours, but most average three hours at their longest stop. Shortest stops range from ten minutes to one hour. The average is one half hour. Only eight percent of the respondents reports operating on Saturday.

Table 1

Stop Cycles

Cycle	%
Two weeks	46
Weekly	14
Three weeks	14
Four weeks	14
Monthly	12

In the location of stops, 94 percent state that they make no use of a formal survey. Seventy-seven percent have no application forms for institutions or schools. Sixty percent of the respondents report that they use their

personal judgement a great deal of the time in the origination and location of stops (Table 2). Distance from the main or branch libraries has no bearing on the location of stops for 77 percent of the operations. For those that must locate their stops a specific minimum distance from a permanent facility, all but one make exceptions to that distance. Reasons to locate a stop within the minimum distance range from the need to serve specific population groups (children, elderly), to encouraging non-traditional users, or to avoid physical boundaries, such as rivers, lakes, and railroads.

Table 2

Stop Location

Reason for stop	%
Personal judgement	31
Institutional request	21
Individual request	18
Other library official	9
Other (pre existing stop)	9

Respondents state that they evaluate their stops by the number of patrons using the service regularly or occasionally. When querried about whether or not their stops meet the 1988 National Bookmobile Guidelines of 40-50 books circulated per hour, 57 percent (20) said that most of their stops meet that standard. Only one respondent reported that

all of its stops meet the standard all of the time. Eleven, or 31 percent, of the operations report that less than half of their stops meet that standard, noting that the "needs" of the patron are more important than meeting numerical requirements. In this case bookmobile librarians rely upon their judgement of the situation for evaluation of a stop. Most bookmobile operations (71%) issue new schedules two times a year--a fall-winter-spring schedule, and then a summer schedule. There was almost a "50-50" split over how long a new stop is tried before deciding it is not working and should be dropped. Fourteen opt for six months, while fifteen give a new stop one year. Three months, nine months, and "other" followed with two respondents each.

Staffing Part III.

Bookmobile librarians divide their time between circulation (34%), reader assistance (25%), administration (21%), other office duties (14%), and "other" (6%) (mostly driving). Fifty-two percent of the bookmobile staff work elsewhere in the library when they are not on the bookmobile. Seventy-one percent engage in continuing education of some sort, and a little less than half (43%) of the respondents believe that other members of the library are not sensitive to the importance of their service. They state, among other reasons, that other library workers do not understand the "special" relationship that commonly develops between the librarian and patron. Some consider the bookmobile as no

more than a "recreational service," while others state that they don't understand why bookmobile librarians are always coming in from a route laden with garden produce or Christmas cookies. This expression of love for bookmobile librarians by their patrons seems to baffle those on the outside looking in.

With respect to the position of person most responsible for the day-to-day operation of the bookmobile, the mean length of time of service is 5.9 years, median is 4.5, and mode is 2.5 years. Bookmobile drivers have been in their positions from three months to thirty-six years. The average is 8.2 years. Clerks have served from two months to thirty-two years, with an average length of service of 7.8 years. Again, this is skewed by a few high years of service. The median time of service is only 4 years.

Collection and Services Parts IV. and V.

Sixty-eight percent of the bookmobiles in Ohio carry between 2,500 and 4,000 books daily on their routes (Table 3). Forty-six percent of these books are for adults, 46 percent are for children, and 12 percent are for young adults. Seventy-one percent of these books are hardcover; the rest are paperbacks. Fiction makes up 66 percent of the collection. Magazines are carried on the majority of bookmobiles in Ohio with 57 percent of the bookmobiles carrying eleven titles or more (Table 4). Non-print material is also circulated by 71 percent of the operations. Ranging

in order of popularity with patrons they are: music cassettes, books-on-tape, video cassettes, and records.

Table 3

Books Available on the Bookmobile

Number of books	%
2,501-4,000	68
Over 4,000	9
2,001-2,500	9
1,501-2,000	7
1,001-1,500	5
500-1,000	2

Table 4

Magazine Titles Available on the Bookmobile

Titles Available	%
0-5	38
Over 21	24
11-15	19
16-20	14
6-10	5

On board catalogs are almost non-existent in Ohio bookmobiles. Only 14 percent of the respondents (5) report having catalogs for their patrons--three are off-line, while two are on-line. Reference service is offered by 77 percent of the operations, but only 23 percent of the bookmobile librarians are able to contact the main or branch libraries

for reference assistance--mainly through the use of cellular telephone or two-way radio. For the most part, bookmobile patrons are not afforded the same level of reference service as users of fixed site libraries. Interlibrary loan and reserves are taken at bookmobile libraries, 86 percent and 97 percent respectively. Delivery is made on the next trip. Surprisingly, only one respondent reported that they regularly mail requested books. Nine respondents did indicate that mailing requests is sometimes used, depending on the need of the patron and other demands for the material being reserved.

Programming for adults or children is, again, next to non-existent on bookmobiles. Only 11 percent report adult programming, mostly in the form of slide shows or puppet shows, aimed at the retired or nursing home residents. Children's programming is offered by 71 percent of the respondents, but in most cases this takes the form of a summer reading program. Reasons for this shortage of programming are obvious--the lack of time and space. Characteristics Part VI.

Of thirty respondents, only six operate more than one bookmobile. Four operate two, and two operate four bookmobiles, respectively. Bookmobiles in Ohio range in year from 1963 to 1990 models. The mean year is 1982; the median and mode is 1984. Odometer readings from under 1,000 miles, for the 1990 models, up to 138,000 miles, found on a 1980

Gerstenslager, exist. The average mileage for a bookmobile in Ohio is 54,000 miles. Gerstenslager is still the most popular bookmobile on the road--47 percent of the respondents are still using them. Barth, Bluebird, Farber, Chevrolet, Dynacoach, VMCI, and Beachcraft are among others listed. As the old Gerstenslagers die out and are not replaced, there may be room for a company to establish itself as the leader in bookmobile production.

A problem with the construction of the questionnaire may exist as only seven respondents report operating diesel units. This seems much too low; the problem could lie in the location of the response blanks within the questionnaire. Bus, R.V., and truck chassis bookmobile styles dominate the field, only six operations report using vans. Thirty out of thirty-three respondents report no access to the handicapped.

V. Conclusions

Clearly, bookmobiles have shortcomings, as far as service to patrons is concerned. While most operations do the best possible job, considering the limitations of bookmobiles, it is time bookmobile operations increased their ability to handle reference questions more completely. Also, the bookmobile patrons are entitled to a catalog of the books on the bookmobile and within the holdings of the sponsoring library, and they need to make themselves accessible to the handicapped. Technology may well hold the key to all these problems.

While the questionnaire did not cover the future technology that is likely be found in bookmobiles, many of the respondents voluntarily added the following information at the end of the survey. Improvements in transmission of computer data via radio wave burst transmission is opening the door for bookmobiles to provide on-line transmission of circulations, on-line public access catalogs, and instant reserve capability. The introduction of cellular telephones to bookmobiles, coupled with the development of small, sophisticated telefacsimile machines is making it possible for librarians to have access to their home library's reference collection. Respondents to the questionnaire stated that they are aware of, and some have committed to, obtaining this new technology for their patrons. Bookmobiles are now being designed to accommodate computer terminals,

phones, "fax" machines, copiers, and printers. Clearly, manufacturers see this as the way of the future. If manufacturers are already developing bookmobiles to meet the future, isn't it possible that with enough pressure from the buyer, they can also be made to develop newer, more affordable wheelchair lifts? It is incumbent upon bookmobile librarians to stay on top of manufacturers in this area. It is also important, for those libraries that are now computerizing their bookmobiles, to keep others informed of their "victories and defeats" through publication. This way all of the bookmobiles in Ohio may benefit from the knowledge gained by others. After all, isn't that what libraries are all about?

May 7, 1990

Mr. Ted J. Smith
c/o Portage County District Library
10482 South Street
Garrettsville, Ohio 44231

Dear Director,

Enclosed you will find a questionnaire that I am hopeful you and your staff will take the time to fill out and return. I am currently involved in research undertaken to determine the extent of bookmobile services in Ohio. It is with the encouragement of John Philip, Supervisor of Field Operations with the State Library of Ohio and the OLA Task Force on Bookmobiles that I approach you at this time.

The questionnaire covers general areas of bookmobile librarianship including: stops and stop selection, staffing, services and programming, characteristics of your bookmobile, budgets, and some personal information. While this questionnaire is needfully long, it contains many close-ended or "yes-no" type questions, and can be completed in a very short time. My request is that the person most responsible for the day-to-day operation of the bookmobile program fill out this questionnaire. If you would, as director, be responsible only for the information in Part Seven of the survey concerning budgets, little of your time will be needed.

If I may, I would like to express the importance of full response on this survey and a quick return, via the self addressed stamped envelope to me, no later than June 15, 1990. No current information of the type sought is available and the results of this survey concerning Ohio bookmobiles will fill that void. I thank you in advance for your cooperation and the cooperation of your staff. Please remember to send the completed questionnaire to me no later than June 15, 1990. Results of the survey will be available upon request.

Sincerely,

Ted J. Smith

TJS
enc

OHIO BOOKMOBILE USAGE SURVEY 1990

Please complete and return the survey by June 15, 1990 to:

Mr. Ted J. Smith
c/o Portage County District Library
10482 South Street
Garrettsville, Ohio 44231

Remember, except for questions concerning budgets, the person most responsible for the day-to-day operation of the bookmobile should complete this survey.

Part I: General Information

1. What is your job title? _____

2. The population size served by the bookmobile _____

3. Number of registered patrons (approx.) 183,814

4. Number af actual users (approx.) 93,991 50%

5. What is your main service area?
   27 a. County
   2 b. Municipal
   6 c. Other

6. What is the most significant problem you face in providing bookmobile services?
   17 a. Maintenance 49%
   ___b. General lack of operating expences
   4 c. Inability to carry enough books on bookmobile 11%
   1 d. Lack of Administration/Board priority 3%
   13 e. Other (specify) low patronage, lack of staff, territorial disputes 37%

9. Total library or materials circulation (1989) 20,508,511

10. Total bookmobile materials circulation (1989) 1,989,262

Part II: Stops

1. How often do you go to your stops?
   5 a. Every week 14%
   16 b. Every two weeks 46%
   5 c. Every three weeks 14%
   5 d. Every four weeks 14%
   4 e. Once a month 12%
   ___f. Other (please specify) many operate different summer schedules

2. Approximately (by percentage) how many of your stops are:
   62 a. Rural ?
   22 b. Suburban ?
   16 c. Urban?

3. How many (by number) of your stops are to institutions?
   61 a. Day care centers 288 d. Schools
   6 b. Hospitals 6 e. Prisons
   192c. Rest homes
   71 f. Other (please specify) retirement communities, handicapped centers

4. How many of your stops are public, community, or neighborhood stops? 1,109

5. Do you have evening stops?
   yes 21 60%
   no 14 40% Latest time at that stop range 6:00-9:00 PM, median 8:00, mode 8:00, mean 8:20

6. Do you have Saturday stops?
   yes 8 23%
   no 27 77%

7. What is the duration of your longest stop? range 3/4-6 1/2, median 3 hrs, mode 3 hrs, mean 4 hrs.

8. What is the duration of your shortest stop? range 10-60 min median 30 min, mode 30 min, mean 26.5 min.

9. Do you make use of any formal, written survey before you scedule a potential stop?
   yes 2 6%
   no 33 94%

10. Do you have an application form or process for stops at institutions or schools that would like your service?
    yes 8 23%
    no 27 77%

11. Do you evaluate your stops by the number of patrons served?
    32 a. Yes 92% 3 c. No 8%

12. Do you design all stops to be located a specific minimum distance from the main library or its branches?
    yes 8 23% no 27 77%
    If yes, what is that distance? _____

13. Do you make exceptions to that distance?
    yes 7 no 1

14. If yes, what are these exceptions? Rank by *number* the order, beginning with 1 for the exception you use the most, 2 next most, etc.
    4 a. Difficult traffic paterns
    1 b. Special population groups (elders, children, etc)
    2 c. To encourage non-traditional users (housing projects, etc.)
    3 d. To avoid physical boundaries (rivers, lakes, etc.)
    5 f. Other stop of long standing

15. In origination of a stop, how great a role does your personal judgement or past experience play in locating the stop? (For example, no one asked for it but you think it would be a good location.)
21 a. Use personal judgement/past experience a great deal
10 b. Use it some of the time
3 c. Use it rarely
1 d. Do not use it in origination stops?
___e. Comments_____

16. Approximately what percentage of your stops were located by
18 a. Individual request?
2 b. Civic/governmental official request?
21 c. Institution request?
6 d. Survey of potential locations?
4 e. Organized neighborhood/community request?
31 f. Personal judgement?
9 g. Library official other than yourself?
9 h. Other? pre-existing stops

17. The 1988 National Bookmobile Guidelines, published by the State Library of Ohio, suggest that the average rate of books checked out per hour should be no lower than 40-50. How many of your stops meet this standard?
1 a. All of them 3%
20 b. Most of them 57%
11 c. Less than half 31%
3 e. I never heard of the national guidelines 9%

18. Do you have a guideline other that this one? (please state)
one circulation/minute, needs of patron

19. Describe other numerical standards you use to evaluate your stops.
3 a. Minimum number of patrons per stop
What is that number? 5, 20, 1 every 3 minutes
28 b. A rough "rule of thumb" dependent on the situation
___c. Comments _____

20. How long do you try a new stop before deciding it is not working and should be dropped?
2 a. Three months
14 b. Six months
2 c. Nine months
15 d. Twelve months
2 e. Other one scheduling period

21. How often do you change your printed bookmobile schedule?
 6 a. Every six months
 4 b. Every year
 25 c. Other Fall-Winter-Spring(school), Summer

22. Does your library use any other type of evaluation for its bookmobile service other than those already mentioned? isolation, need, administration decision

23. How many stops does your bookmobile make during an average cycle? not determined from data

24. How many service hours do you provide during an average service cycle? (time doors are actually open) not det.

25. Projected annually my public service hours are range 420-3600, Mean 1,400

Part III: Staffing

1. How would you describe the duties of the bookmobile librarian?
 a. Administration 21 %
 b. Circulation clerk 34 %
 c. Reader Assistant 25 %
 d. Office duties 14 %
 e. Other 6 % Driving

2. Does your bookmobile staff work elsewhere in the library when they are not on the bookmobile?
 Yes 18 52% No 17 48%
 If yes, where adminidtrative and other clerical

3. Below, please indicate the number and training of individuals assigned to the bookmobile. Include under "part time" those full time employees who only work part time on the bookmobile.

	Staffing		Training (Highest level)			
	number	Hours/wk	H.S.	BA	MLS	Other
F/time						
P/time 1	Inadequate information provided					
P/time 2						

4. Does the staff assigned to the bookmobile participate in continuing education programs?
 Yes 25 71% No 10 29%

5. What is your highest level of training? MLS-15, BA/BS-11 High School-9

6. In your view, are other members of the library staff sensitive to the importance of the bookmobile service?
 Yes 20 57% No 15 43%

7. If no, what is the reason for this insensitivity? understanding that the bookmobile is different than a "regular library".

Part IV: Collection

1. On an average day, how many books are available on the bookmobile? (please place an x in the appropriate spot)

	Number of bookmobiles operated					
	#1	#2	#3	#4		
a. 500-1000	1				1	2%
b. 1001-1500	2				2	5%
c. 1501-2000	2	1			3	7%
d. 2001-2500	4				4	9%
e. 2501-4000	23	5	2		30	68%
f. Over 4000	3		1		4	9%

2. On an average day, how many magazines (titles) are available on the bookmobile? (Please place x in appropriate spot)

	Number of bookmobiles operated					
	#1	#2	#3	#4		
a. 0-5	12	3	1		16	38%
b. 6-10	2				2	5%
c. 11-15	8				8	19%
d. 16-20	4	1	1		6	14%
e. Over 21	9	1			10	24%

3. Are books purchased separately to form a collection on the bookmobile?
Yes 30 86% No 5 14%

4. If no, how is the collection developed? borrow from the main library

5. If books are purchased separately for the bookmobile, is that collection supplemented by books from the main library?
Yes 22
No 4 Does not apply 4

6. On an average day, what percentage of the books available on the bookmobile are intended for the following readers? (percentage should total 100%)
40 a. Adults 12 c. Young Adults
46 b. Children 2 d. Non-Circulating Reference

7. What percentage of the books identified in Q-6 are in the following format? (percentage should total 100%)
a. Hardbound 71 b. Paperbound 29

8. What percentage of books on the bookmobile are fiction and nonfiction? (specify percentages-total 100%)
a. Fiction 66 b. Nonfiction 34

9. Is there a catalog on the bookmobile for patrons listing the books that are available to them?
Yes 5 14% No 30 86%

9a. Is this catalog automated?
Yes 5 No ___

9b. If automated is it
2 on-line? 3 off-line?

10. Do you circulate non-print materials from the bookmobile?
a. Yes 25 71% No 10 29%

11. If yes, identify four types of non-print materials that you circulate by order of demand
1. music cassettes
2. books-on-tape
3. videos
4. records

Part V: Services and Programming

1. Do you provide reference services from the bookmobile?
Yes 27 77% No 8 23%

2. Is it possible for you to contact the main library from the bookmobile for assistance in answering reference questions?
Yes 8 23% No 27 77%

a. How? Telephone 6, Microcomputer ____, Two-way radio ____
Other (please specify) _____

3. Do you offer inter-library loan services from the bookmobile?
Yes 30 86% No 5 14%

3a. Do you offer reserve services from the bookmobile?
Yes 34 97% No 1 3%

4. How do patrons receive these requests?
a. Items are mailed to patrons 1
b. Items are brought on next bookmobile trip 34
c. Other 9 mail if need is great enough

5. Does your bookmobile provide adult programming?
Yes 4 No 31
If yes, describe briefly film/slides to nursing homes, puppet shows

6. How often are these programs offered to the adults?
___a. Weekly ___c. Quarterly
1 b. Monthly 3 d. Annually
___e. Other _____

7. Does your bookmobile provide children's programming?
Yes 26 74% No 9 26%
If yes, describe briefly summer reading program, story times at day care centers

8. How often are these programs offered to children?
2 a. Weekly ____c. Quarterly
4 b. Monthly 9 d. Annually
7 e. Other

9. Briefly list any other services or programming you offer patrons that have not been discussed.

Part VI: Characteristics and Maintance of the Bookmobile

1. How many bookmobiles does your library operate? _____

2. How old and of what manufacture are these bookmobiles?

		Year	1990 Odometer	Manufacturer
a.	#1	range 1963-1990	1,000-138,000	
b.	#2	mean-1982	54,642	
c.	#3	median-1984	50,000	
d.	#4	mode-1984		

3. How are they powered?
7 Diesel 25 Gas 3 Other (please specify) _____

4. How many of the following types of bookmobiles do you operate? (specify number)
a. Van 6 c. Tractor trailer ___
b. Bus, Van, Truck Chassis 28

5. Does your bookmobile provide access to the handicapped?
Yes 3 No 30

6. Indicate below the equipment your bookmobile carries.
9 a. Microcomputer (circulation)
4 b. Microcomputer (public access catalog)
7 c. Cellular telephone
6 d. Two-way radio
3 e. Telefacsimile
1 f. Printer
3 g. Copier
2 h. Other (specify) CD Rom

6. Please estimate how many days in 1989 your bookmobile did not operate because of mechanical problems? Days _____
range 0-75, median 5, mean 11.5

Part VII: Budgets

1. What is the total library system budget? $ Insufficient Data

2. What is the total bookmobile budget? $ Insufficient Data

Breakdown:

Staff	$ Data
Maintenence of vehicles	$_____
Public relations cost	$_____
Gasoline	$_____
Equipment/supplies	$_____
Postage	$_____
Conferences/training	$_____
Dues	$_____
Amortized cost of vehicle (10 year)	$_____
Other costs	$_____

Part VIII: Yourself and Your Library (to be kept strictly confidential)

1. What is the range of your salary as bookmobile librarian?
   - 3 a. 8000-12000
   - 6 b. 12001-17000
   - 12 c. 17001-22000
   - 5 d. 22001-27000
   - 6 e. Other (please specify) all over 27,000

2. How long have you worked in your present position?
   - 5 a. 0-1 years
   - 11 b. 2-3 years
   - 5 c. 4-5 years
   - 4 d. 6-8 years
   - 2 e. 9-10 years
   - 4 f. 10-15 years
   - 4 g. Over 15 years

3. How long have your driver and clerk worked in their present positions?
   a. Driver (if other than you) _____
   b. Clerk #1 (if other than yourself) _____
      Clerk #2 (if other than yourself) _____

This completes the questionnaire. Again, I want to thank you for your cooperation and assure you that all your answers will be held in the strictest confidence.

Driver---range 3 months-30 years	Clerks--range 2 months-32yrs.
mean 8.28 years	mean 7.12 years
median 5 years	median 4 years
mode 5 years	mode none

END NOTES

[1]Henry Bailey Stevens, "R.L.D.," Wilson Bulletin, 10 (February 1936): 372.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., 373.

[4]Ibid., 372.

[5]Roy Bongaratz, "Books in the Wild," Publishers Weekly, 231 (November 1986): 24.

[6]Ibid.

[7]John J. Philip, "No Bits, No Bytes, But Plenty of Library Service: Bookmobiles in Ohio," Ohio Library Association Bulletin 55 (July 1985): 21.

[8]R.R. Bowker, American Library Directory 1989-90, 42d ed., (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1989)

[9]Eleanor F. Brown, Bookmobiles and Bookmobile Services (Metuchen New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1967)

[10]Ibid., Preface.

[11]Ibid., 266.

[12]Ibid., 366.

[13]Teh-wei Hu, Bernard H. Booms, and Lynn W. Kaltreider, A Benefit-Cost Analysis of Alternative Library Delivery Systems (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1975)

[14]Ibid., 4.

[15]Ibid., 5-6.

[16]Ibid., 7.

[17]Richard Brooks, "Bookmobile Service: How Much Does it Cost?" Minnesota Libraries 23 (Winter 1973-74): 107.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., 109.

[20]Ibid., 110

[21] Bernard Vavrek, "What is Happening Today in Rural Bookmobile Service," The Center for the Study of Rural Librarianship (1978): 19-32.

[22] Ibid., 25.

[23] Ibid., 21.

[24] Joanne Abel, "Survey of Bookmobile Service in North Carolina," North Carolina Libraries 44 (Winter 1986): 225-29.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Terry McLaughlin, "Bookmobile Reference Service Survey," Ohio Library Association Bulletin 54 (October 1984): 16.

[27] Ibid., 17.

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